
Developing A School Improvement Plan

A Step-by-Step Guide for Using the
Virginia Department of Education
Recommended Format for Improvement Planning

Prepared by



At the request of the
Virginia Department of Education
Office of Accountability

June 7, 2003

Developing A School Improvement Plan

**A Step-by-Step Guide for Using the
Virginia Department of Education
Recommended Format
for Improvement Planning**

**Prepared by AEL
at the request of the
Virginia Department of Education
Office of Accountability**

AEL is a not-for-profit corporation that applies the latest education research and technology to spark innovation and promote strategies for student success. AEL delivers products and services that integrate research and development, evaluation, professional development, technology, and diverse perspectives. AEL operates several contracts funded by the U.S. Department of Education: a Regional Educational Laboratory, the Region IV Comprehensive Center, an Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education, and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Information about AEL research, products, and services is available by writing, calling, or visiting AEL's Web site.



AEL
Post Office Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
304-347-0400
800-624-9120
304-347-0487 Fax
aelinfo@ael.org
www.ael.org

© 2003 by AEL

AEL's participation in this project was sponsored wholly or in part by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, under contract number ED-01-CO-0016. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of IES, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. government.

AEL is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

This school improvement planning guide is built on the principle that a focused planning process based on student achievement and program data is very important for improving student achievement. AEL staff developed it during the 2001-2002 school year at the request of the Director of the Virginia Department of Education Office for Accountability. The original purpose of the guide was to provide Virginia schools accredited with warning with a step-by-step process for developing a comprehensive school improvement plan. The guide has been field tested with many schools in the Commonwealth and undergone revisions based on comments from school improvement teams and technical assistance providers.

School Improvement teams will find that The School Improvement Planning Guide answers the following questions

1. How do we develop our goals?
2. How do we select appropriate objectives to meet the goal?
3. What data do we need to measure progress toward meeting the objectives and, ultimately, the goal?
4. How do we design strategies that will be effective in moving us toward meeting the goal?
5. How do we ensure that the strategy will be successfully implemented?
6. How do we measure the effectiveness of the strategy on which it is implemented?

The guide is designed to lead a school planning team through the development of the school improvement plan. The format includes

- A description of each component of the plan in the order it should be considered in the planning process. Guiding questions are used to direct the team discussion of each specific component. This section of the guide also includes a bulleted checklist that can be used to assess the quality of the component of the team's plan.
- A "planning cue" found in a shaded box following the description of the components. The planning cue is intended to guide the team through the planning process. It includes a cue for the type of data that should be used for each specific component of the planning process.
- A sample school improvement plan demonstrating each component. The sample school improvement plan develops over the course of the guide. As each component of the plan is reviewed in the guide, an example is added to the sample plan.

It is suggested that the school improvement planning team first review the guide paying careful attention to the planning and

data cues. Time should be allowed to gather the data needed to complete the plan. The team should move through the planning guide one component at a time as they prepare their school improvement plan. The bulleted checklist for each component should be used to monitor the quality of the team effort as it is completed.

This guide has been found to be helpful for all schools and has particular relevance with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. A focused school improvement planning process will help school meet and maintain adequate yearly progress.